

THE
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Berlin, had appointed Mahmud Aga from Podgoricë as *kaymakam* (sub-prefect) of Mirditë.⁴¹ It was pursuing a centralistic policy, trying to turn Mirditë into a district of the Ottoman empire with a *kaymakam*.⁴² The Austro-Hungarian government intervened and called on the Porte to recognize Prenk Bib Doda as the legitimate ruler of the territory, while the *Kapidan* himself requested of the Grand Vizier that he be authorized to administer and govern Mirditë with the privileges and customs which the Sultan "had always granted and recognized from the time of the conquest" and with the rank and title of his deceased father Bib Doda Pasha.⁴³ Now, as the movement led by Ali Pasha Gucija, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the League, had assumed great proportions—the inhabitants of Prizren, Djakovë, Ipek, Dibër, and the highlands followed him—the Catholics of the north anxiously watched the developments and waited for a favorable opportunity to make common cause with Ali Pasha. The well-informed inhabitants of the Shkodër province saw in the movement a tendency on the part of its leader to acquire control of the north, and thus prepare himself for a more efficient defense against eventual aggressions. These might come especially from Montenegro; profiting by eventual troubles, Montenegro might attempt a *coup de main* in order to extend her frontiers to include Prizren and Shkodër.⁴⁴

The big landowning families of middle Albania—Berat, Elbasan, Krujë, Tiranë, and Vlorë—had almost dissolved their loose connections with the Albanian League. Their

⁴¹Schmucker to Haymerle, Scutari, 24 October 1879, No. 91, *HHStA*, PA XII/256, Türkei IV.

⁴²Lippich to Andrassy, Scutari, 29 March 1879, No. 27, in *ibid.*

⁴³See copy of the letter of Prenk Bib Doda to Said Pasha (Scutari, 24 November 1879) in Schmucker to Haymerle, Scutari, 24 November 1879, No. 104, and Kosjek to Haymerle, Constantinople, 19 December 1879, No. 112 B, in *ibid.*

⁴⁴Thoemmel to Haymerle, Cetinje, 10 March 1881, No. 127 res., Beilage 1 (letter of the Acting Consul in Antivari, Signor Depolo, Antivari, 1 March 1881, No. 18/res.), *HHStA*, PA XII/263, Türkei VIII B.